Project Summary - Phase 2, Lower Squaw Creek Restoration

Work proposed in this grant will support the next phase of work for the Lower Squaw Creek Restoration Project. Located in Olympic Valley, Lower Squaw Creek includes a 2-mile reach of stream and adjacent meadow floodplain. The restoration plan is supported by a broad group of stakeholders, including local landowners, government agencies, local utility districts, and environmental groups. Agreeing on next steps is a crucial juncture of the project.

Work completed to date includes several detailed technical analyses of the creek and groundwater conditions affecting Lower Squaw Creek (LSC). Specific efforts include:

- A Groundwater Characterization Study (West Yost Report, 2005).
- A Watershed Characterization Report (University of Nevada – Reno)
- A sediment source assessment for the upper watershed (Bullard *et al*., 2002)
- A number of studies in support of a TMDL promulgated by Lahontan RWQCB
- A report describing conceptual creek and meadow restoration alternatives (Philip Williams & Associates, Ltd. [PWA], 2007)

This grant ($49,900 from SNC with $50,100 matching) will support the following objectives of this next phase of work:

- **Establish a common stakeholder vision.** Community workshops will facilitate gaining support for a preferred conceptual restoration alternative from those previously set forth in the 2007 report by PWA. These facilitated workshops will outline the timing, cost, benefit, and resulting configuration for the restoration plan and allow stakeholders to participate toward a unified vision. Gaining stakeholder and landowner support is crucial in the success of restoring LSC.

- **Better understand Well/Aquifer/Creek interactions**. Olympic Valley's primary water supply is from the groundwater aquifer beneath the Squaw Creek meadow. Widespread public concern about potential creek/meadow impacts from groundwater extraction will be addressed by: 1) a technical workshop comprised of a small, focused group of groundwater, hydrology and geomorphology experts with specific knowledge of the Squaw Creek system to discuss the state of existing knowledge, evaluate available data, frame the potential impacts, and outline methods to further our understanding of these impacts; and 2) an initial creek/groundwater interaction study that will use existing resources and data to evaluate the scale of potential creek and meadow impacts from various groundwater extraction rates and methods.

- **Technical Feasibility Studies**. Remaining funds (if available) will be used to address one or more critical factors that affect the feasibility of proposed alternatives as described in the conceptual alternatives report (PWA, 2007).

Gaining a collective vision for success (both in terms of stakeholder consensus and technical needs) is a crucial element of this phase of the project. Subsequent phases will include a detailed feasibility assessment of the selected restoration alternative, development of project plans and necessary environmental documents, and project implementation.